

2011 Differentiated Instruction Institute:
“Just Right—Right Now”—Across the Spectrum

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**Teaching Smarter with the
Brain in Focus**



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A to Z Review

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

____Pre ____Post ____Individual ____Partner ____Group

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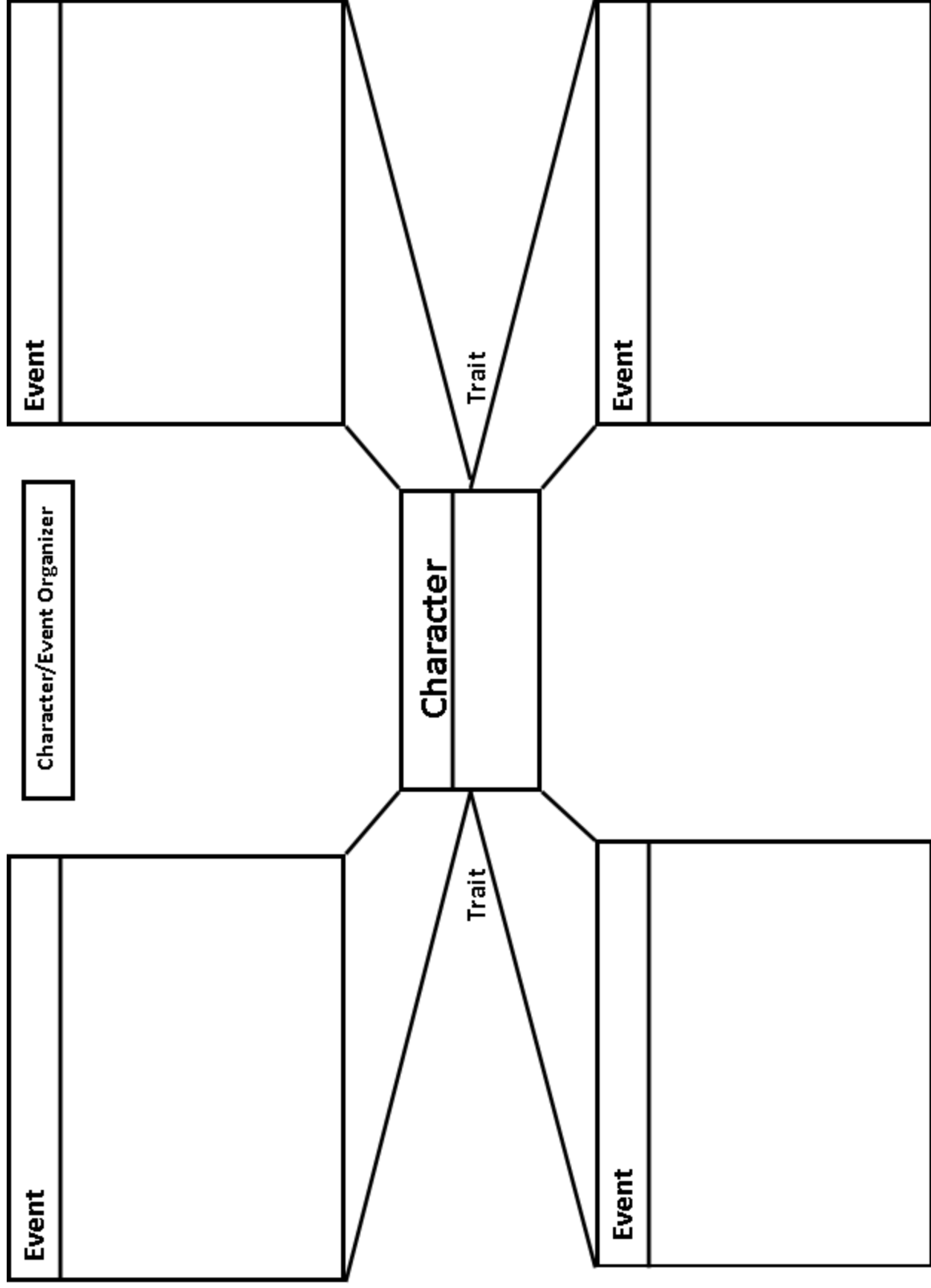
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Do we know “it” when we see it?!

Consider these two approaches to activating prior knowledge in fifth grade social studies classes and think about which one builds more connections:

Scenario I	Scenario 2
<p>Teacher: “Today we will be starting a unit on the conditions in the states following the Civil War. It was a period of time referred to as Reconstruction. What do you think of when you hear the word Reconstruction?”</p> <p>Max: “It must mean that something was torn down because it has to be constructed again.”</p> <p>Teacher: “Thank you, Max. Who has another thought?”</p> <p>Sophie: “When a tree fell on our house in the storm, we had to reconstruct the garage roof.”</p> <p>Teacher: “Good connection. Can someone else give me an idea?”</p> <p>Reggie: “When things are broken, like my little brother breaks my toys, I try to put them back together. Isn’t that reconstruction?”</p> <p>Teacher: “All these ideas tell us something about Reconstruction. Turn to page 128 in your book and let’s get some more information.”</p>	<p>Teacher: “I want to show you several photographs from cities and towns that were taken during and right after the Civil War. While I do that I want you to write down descriptive words or phrases that come to mind when you see the pictures.”</p> <p>Teacher: “Now, I want you to share these words with one or two people next to you and see if you can add new ones to your own list.”</p> <p>Teacher: “Tell me some of the words and I will write them on the chart paper?”</p> <p>Students: “destruction, ruin, bombed out, death, abandoned, lonely, hungry, poor, wounded, broken, destroyed, help, sad, homeless, hopeful, lost, start over”</p> <p>Teacher: “So...here’s my question. Why is the period right after the civil war referred to as “Reconstruction?” Using what you know and additional information you might have gathered from the pictures, talk to your neighbor(s) and come up with as many areas as you can that you think needed “reconstructing?”</p> <p>{ Students list areas and support responses. }</p> <p>Teacher: “Here’s a follow-up question. Have there been times in your lives when a period of “reconstruction” has existed either personally or in our country or world?”</p>



Character Traits

Trait	Description
Integrity	To act according to a sense of what's right and wrong
Initiative	To do something because it needs to be done
Flexibility	To be willing to alter plans when necessary
Organization	To plan, arrange, and implement in an orderly readily useable way
Sense of Humor	To laugh and be playful without harming others
Effort	To do your best
Common Sense	To use good judgment
Problem-Solving	To create solutions to difficult situations and everyday problems
Responsibility	To respond when appropriate, to be accountable for your actions
Patience	To wait calmly for someone or something
Friendship	To make and keep a friend through mutual trust and caring
Curiosity	A desire to investigate and seek understanding of one's world
Cooperation	To work together toward a common goal or purpose
Caring	To feel and show concern for others
Courage	To act according to one's beliefs
Pride	Satisfaction from doing your personal best

Compare/Contrast Thinking Map

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How Alike?





How Different?



With Regard To

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Teaching Smarter with the Brain in Focus: Lesson Design Reminders

- ☐ Is your classroom a safe, nurturing classroom for students absent of threats?
- ☐ Are you practicing the “age” rule in regard to how long you ask students to remain in the same state of attention when planning the lesson?
- ☐ Do you activate prior knowledge of students before teaching new concepts by building connections based on students’ experiences, hooking fledgling synapses to existing neurons?
- ☐ Do you stimulate growth of synapses by consistently creating opportunities for higher-level (Bloom) and divergent thinking throughout the lesson including question/answer interactions and in assignments?
- ☐ Are you modeling what you want students to do (and in turn, activating mirror neurons) through:
 - Strong and weak examples for their critique
 - Clear criteria for the task (“look-fors”)
 - Rubrics for projects and key assignments
- ☐ Do you vary activities and keep your students engaged throughout the lesson, encouraging social interaction through cooperative groups and partner learning experiences?
- ☐ Do you intersperse movement and exercise during lessons to keep oxygen in the brain, improve attention, and enhance growth of synapses?
- ☐ Do you increase retention and memory of students by using:
 - novelty in your teaching, i.e., props, costumes, unusual activities?
 - non-linguistic representations, i.e., images, pictures to enhance note-taking, vocabulary?
 - music to enhance learning environment, introduce concepts; songs, rhythms, rap to increase retention of content?
- ☐ Do you keep the Primacy/Recency “rule” in mind ensuring that:
 - the first part of class is focused with clear statements about the lesson’s learning goals?
 - closure occurs at the end of the lesson highlighting the key points learned?
 - exit “tickets” are used for students to restate the key points of the lesson?
- ☐ Do you re-teach for mastery using elaboration, rather than repetition of the same strategies to get the right answer?